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NEWSBYTES

Excessive speed cause of Global Hawk incident

WRIGHT-PATTERSON AIR FORCE BASE, Ohio – The Air Force released the results of an investigation board examining the Dec. 6, 1999 Global Hawk Unmanned Aerial Vehicle No. 3 mishap.

The incident occurred following a successful mission and full-stop landing at Edwards Air Force Base, Calif., when the UAV accelerated to an excessive taxi speed and veered off the main runway, collapsing its nose gear and damaging its sensor suite.

“The primary cause of this mishap was the execution of a commanded, taxi ground-speed of 155 knots,” said Col. James R. Heald, investigation board president. “The excessive ground speed was introduced by a combination of known software problems between the vehicle’s Air Force Mission Support System Core mission planning system and its aircraft/weapon/electronics-specific mission planning system.”

AF delivers antenna to Beantown

WASHINGTON – A C-17 crew gave up their Easter Sunday to rescue holiday travelers from extended delays by delivering a critical radar antenna to Boston’s Logan Airport – the ninth busiest airport in the country.

The crew, members of the Air Force Reserve’s 437th Airlift Wing, Charleston Air Force Base, S.C., was returning home from a mission when Air Mobility Command diverted them to Oklahoma City to pick up a replacement radar antenna after strong storm winds knocked out Logan’s main radar, April 22.

The \$300,000, 20,000-pound replacement antenna was so massive, the Federal Aviation Administration requested support for an emergency airlift, said Air Force Reserve Lt. Col. Peter Trapp, deputy chief, Operations Division, National Air Traffic Services Cell.

“The entire crew had (family) waiting at home, but this is why we are in the Air Force – to be of service to others,” said Capt. Robert J. Hahn, aircraft commander.

“We all joined the Air Force to make a difference, and every once in a while we have that opportunity and can help others,” Colonel Trapp said. “I am very proud of the cooperation our military



Master Sgt. James R. Noble, C-17 loadmaster, supervises the off-loading of the ASR-9 radar antenna at Logan Airport in Boston, Mass., on Easter Sunday. The Air Force provided quick airlift of this critically needed radar antenna, preventing airline delays in Boston and throughout the nation. (U.S. Air Force photo by Senior Airman Jason Ide)

Continued on Page 4

Open season offers opportunity to change savings plan

RANDOLPH AIR FORCE BASE, Texas (AFPC) - Federal employees can participate in or make changes to their current election during the Thrift Savings Plan Open Season May 15 - July 31.

Thrift Savings Plan is a federal civilian employee voluntary retirement savings and investment plan with three funds available to the employee:

- G: Government Securities Index Investment Fund,
- F: Bond Index Fund, and
- C: Common Stocks Index Fund.

Participants can invest in any combination of the three funds.

“Two main features of TSP are before tax savings and tax-deferred earnings,” said Christine Watkins, employee relations specialist, Civilian Personnel Operations at the Air Force Personnel Center.

“This means the contributions made to TSP come out of the participant’s pay before taxes and the earnings are not taxed until the money is received.”

Other benefits include a choice of investment options, inter-fund transfers, loans from the employee’s own contributions and earnings, in-service withdrawals and portable benefits if the individual leaves federal service.

This article is available in its entirety online.



Letters to the editor

U.S. Air Force Online News publishes letters based on their appeal to an Air Force-wide audience each week.

Send your letter to the U.S. Air Force Online News staff by completing the online form at <http://www.af.mil/newspaper/>

Due to the number of letters, not all letters can be published. Letters may be edited for grammar and length. Only letters accompanied by a valid name and email address will be considered.

Equitable bonuses

Has anyone ever thought of giving a “thank you” bonus to departing retirees? How about telling these folks when they enlist we will put \$5,000 into an interest-earning account for them, and each time they re-enlist we will deposit another \$5,000. After ... retiring, they will receive that money, with interest ... If you re-enlisted for the money, I really don’t want to work with you. If you re-enlisted because you enjoy the Air Force, and took the money because it was there, congratulations! ... Let’s make the bonuses equal for everyone.

Gerald W. Buck
Whiteman AFB, MO

How about a headhunter fee?

Everyone in my office got a hearty chuckle out of “AF offers additional \$5,000 enlistment bonus” (April 19), until we realized an 18-year-old with no proven track record is getting \$5,000 for coming in, while some old-timers who’ve served honorably for a dozen years get nothing. Instead of handing a kid a hefty lump of cash, why doesn’t the Air Force start a headhunter fee? If active-duty people were given \$500 for every recruit they signed up, the Air Force’s

recruiting problems would come to an end - fast.

Senior Airman Adam Stump
Eielson AFB, Alaska

Dormitory costs

I was a little bothered by the numbers in “One-plus-one equals privacy for dormitory residents” (April 19). The story reports “Since 1995, the Air Force has built 9,600 new one-plus-one rooms at a cost of \$593 million.” That comes out to \$61,770 per room and the land is free Assuming the total square footage is about 336 per room, the cost per square foot is \$184. My house in Albuquerque only cost \$60 per square foot in 1996 and the price included 1/3 acre of land. Why does housing and dormitory construction cost so much for the Air Force?

Capt. Kelly Lowder
Air Force Academy, Colo.

(Editor’s note: — The \$593 million cost includes all supporting costs associated with constructing a new dormitory to include landscaping, parking lots, utilities, demolition of dormitories being replaced if applicable, etc. In addition, dormitories are built to a higher construction standard than residential homes.)

Who sets the professional example?

by Staff Sgt. Cheryl L. Toner
Kelly Air Force Base, Texas

While driving home from work recently, I can honestly say I was ashamed to be in uniform.

While hundreds of us motorists slowed down during rush hour traffic, and crowded from five lanes to three, a military person in uniform flew down the shoulder of the highway. The driver’s window of his blue Neon was rolled down and his BDU-clad arm hung prominently out the window. He sped for as long as possible on the shoulder before — at the last moment — he jerked his car to his left, almost causing an accident.

The motorist he cut off slammed on his brakes and blew his horn. The military guy extended his arm straight out and — you guessed it — gave the other driver the “bird.”

It reminded me of a question I was asked that same morning while being interviewed for an upgraded security clearance. I was asked something to the effect of how I felt about America and being one of its citizens. After a

You do!

few seconds to think about it, I told the investigator that as corny as it sounds, I’m proud to be an American.

I then told her about a conversation I had while deployed to Dhahran, Saudi Arabia. Bashar, one of the local workers we dealt with for the base newspaper, said his first day in Saudi was the first day of Desert Storm.

The city of Dhahran — much like many cities there — has an elaborate public address system. This is quite obvious during prayer time as prayer music is played on the system daily five or six times for this Muslim society.

During Desert Storm, the local worker said the public address system was used to warn the citizens of incoming SCUD missiles. As a wailing warning filled the air, residents were supposed to take cover.

However, Bashar said they didn’t. Instead, residents stood outside and watched as the United States used Patriot missiles to destroy the incoming SCUDs. Residents actually stood outside and watched us defend their country like they were watching an elaborate fireworks display. They had so much faith in the ability and professionalism of the American military that they did not fear for their lives.

As I sat in my car during rush hour, and watched with shame as this GI sped, wove in and out of lanes and created a trail of horns and brake lights, I wondered what those Saudis would have thought. Would they still have the same confidence in us had they witnessed this unprofessional behavior? And what would these drivers think when they saw another person in uniform?

As a world-ready mighty force with an awesome reputation, it’s a shame some of us don’t always live up to it. **(Editor’s note: Sergeant Toner is assigned to the Air Force News Service at the Air Force News Agency, Kelly AFB, Texas)**



Study finds AF offers quality childcare at reasonable cost

By Staff Sgt. Cynthia Miller
Headquarters United States Air Force

WASHINGTON — Air Force child development centers provide higher quality childcare services at a reasonable cost when compared to their civilian counterparts, a recent government study concluded.

The study, conducted by the General Accounting Office, compared Air Force CDCs, which fall under Defense Department childcare guidelines, to 401 civilian providers in four states to determine how much quality childcare costs. No other services involved in the study were used in the comparison.

“Childcare is considered high-quality when caregivers are sensitive in responding to children’s social behavior, participate in their play and learning activities, and guide their behavior in a positive manner,” the report stated.

Structural features, such as health and safety, group size, child-to-staff ratio, caregiver training and number of children per caregiver were also considered.

“We’re very pleased,” said Eliza Nesmith, a child and youth specialist at the air staff. “Their results confirmed what we already knew — our military programs are doing the job they need to do.”

According to the study, 100 percent of Air Force CDCs, and 95 percent of all DOD child development centers, meet the accreditation standards of the National Association for the Education of Young Children, a widely recognized professional association. Just 6 percent of the civilian providers studied met NAEYC standards, which is consistent with the national average.

The report said military services “elected to meet NAEYC standards as a supplement to DOD requirements for child development and safety.” Compliance with NAEYC standards is voluntary for civilian centers.

“The military has made a commitment to quality,” Ms. Nesmith said. “So parents can feel confident when they enroll their child at a military center.”

The DOD childcare program requires



All Air Force child development centers are accredited through the National Association for the Education of Young Children compared to the national average of just 6 percent. Congress praised the quality of the program and identified it as a “model for the rest of the nation.”

its caregivers to complete comprehensive child development training including cardiopulmonary resuscitation training, first aid, and a set of Defense Department-wide family childcare modules.

“There is no comparison (between military and civilian childcare centers),” said Marine Lt. Col. Beverly Runolfson, who has two children enrolled at the Bolling Air Force Base CDC in Washington, D.C. “When I drop my children off in the morning, all of the providers know my kids’ names, not just one or two. At the civilian centers I’ve gone to, it’s more like factory childcare and very impersonal.”

Congress has praised the quality of the DOD child development program and identified it as a “model for the rest of the nation,” the report stated.

Although childcare fees are rated on a sliding scale based on total family income, the Air Force average weekly rate for childcare at its CDCs is \$77 based on 50 hours of care, Ms. Nesmith said.

“That’s the average cost you get when you add the low-end and high-end rates,” she said. “In the D.C. area, the average cost for civilian childcare is between \$135 and \$150 per week.”

This article is available in its entirety online.

Mandatory Visa travel card use begins May 1

WASHINGTON — By law, all Air Force members traveling on government business must use their government Visa travel card beginning May 1.

However, not having received a card yet won’t keep people from official travel and also won’t interfere with reimbursements for official travel, according to Michael Weber, program manager for the Air Force travel card program.

“There’s a rumor going around that if you don’t use the card you won’t be reimbursed,” Mr. Weber said. “That is not true — we will pay people regardless of whether they use the card.” However, not using the card can subject travelers to disciplinary action from their commanders, according to Air Force policy guidance.

The Travel and Transportation Reform Act of 1998 requires all government travelers to use the card. For the Air Force, this means all active duty, civilian employees and members of the Air National Guard and Air Force Reserve in federal service should be prepared to use their government travel card.

AF increases line colonel promotion opportunities

WASHINGTON (AFP) — The Air Force will increase promotion opportunities for line colonels to 55 percent for the Calendar Year 00 Line Colonel Board which meets July 17.



This is a 5 percent increase above the 50 percent rate that has been in place since 1992 and translates into approximately 62 more promotion quotas for the July board.

In addition to the increased promotion opportunities, the “Definitely Promote” allocation rate is also returning to its historical rate of 25 percent, up from 20 percent where it has been since the height of the drawdown.

This article is available in its entirety online.



Global Hawk sets record, demonstrates capabilities

By Sue Baker
Aeronautical Systems
Center Public Affairs

WRIGHT-PATTERSON AIR FORCE BASE, OHIO – The Air Force's Global Hawk Unmanned Aerial Vehicle set a world endurance record for jet-powered, unmanned aircraft April 14 - 15 from Edwards Air Force Base, Calif.

The Global Hawk reached an altitude of 65,100 feet Mean Sea Level during a 31.5-hour period breaking the previous record held for 26 years.

The record-breaking flight came just prior to Global Hawk's six-week deployment to the Air Armament Center, Eglin AFB, Fla., to demonstrate its unique reconnaissance capabilities during two major exercises – Linked Seas 00 and Joint Task Force Exercise 00-02. As part of the deployment, Global Hawk will fly its first flight along the East Coast and first trans-Atlantic flight to Europe.

During the first exercise, planned for May 1 - 12, Global Hawk will provide direct support to amphibious operations,



A developmental flight vehicle, Global Hawk will provide Air Force and other, joint-service commanders, high-altitude, long-endurance battlefield reconnaissance imagery in near real-time. When operational, Global Hawk will be able to fly autonomously at altitudes greater than 60,000 feet and remain on station for more than 24 hours.

in a NATO environment involving air, sea, sub-surface, and land-based assets.

In the second exercise, slated to run from May 14 - 19, Global Hawk will provide direct support for the joint maritime mission of a Navy Carrier Battle Group and an Amphibious Ready Group/Marine Expeditionary Unit in a land-sea environment.

"Global Hawk will provide the Joint Force Commander with flexible capability to acquire near-real-time reconnaissance information at extended ranges and

duration, in day or night, all-weather conditions," said Lt. Col. Mike Trundy, deployment commander, Global Hawk Program Office.

"Since this will take place in an operationally-realistic environment, we've also planned exercise-specific opportunities for Global Hawk to demonstrate its unique imagery collection, processing and transmission skills to warfighters. The UAV also will provide continuous intelligence about the battlespace, bomb/battle damage assessment, and time-sensitive targeting.

This article is available in its entirety online.

AF delivers critical antenna to Beantown airport

Continued from Page 1

members demonstrated. When the Total Force sets out to accomplish something, our great people ensure we succeed."

"Because of the unique capabilities of the C-17, we are often called upon to perform special airlift missions," said Capt. Dave Harden, co-pilot. "In less than 24 hours from receiving notification of the mission, we were able to safely pick up the radar in Oklahoma and deliver it to Boston. It is because of the understanding of our families and the outstanding support of the entire crew and support personnel

at Charleston that we can accomplish these missions at a moment's notice."

Upon arriving at the FAA Logistics Center at the Oklahoma City airport, the crew found that members of the Oklahoma Air National Guard's 137th Airlift Wing, also located at the airport, had already palletized the outsize cargo onto airlift pallets for transport on the C-17. This support from the 137th was critical since the C-17 had only one loadmaster aboard, Colonel Trapp said.

"The Air Force was outstanding responding immediately when called upon," said Doyle Bordelon, an FAA radar man-

ager out of Atlantic City, N.J. "This was really a great partnership between the Air Force, the FAA and Logan Airport officials."

Without the radar, airport officials had to rely on a backup regional radar to guide in aircraft, allowing only about 20 flights per hour to land, half of the typical number of arrivals per hour under the current weather conditions, according to Dan Oberlander, FAA radar coordinator. With the radar in place and operating in good weather, the airport averages a landing or take off every minute.

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